

Washington, D.C. Congressman Sanford D. Bishop Jr., a Member of the House Appropriations Committee, today announced that the House of Representatives approved the fiscal year (FY) 2008 Homeland Security Appropriations bill by a vote of 268 to 150. Congressman Bishop voted in favor of the bill.

"As a former member of the Appropriations subcommittee on Homeland Security, I know first-hand the importance of this bill to the national security of our nation and our citizens. I am particularly pleased to see increases in previously under-funded areas such as border security and state and local emergency management," said Congressman Bishop. "Keeping this country safe and secure requires a commitment from the top-down and the bottom-up, with proper resources and attention given those communities and industries most vulnerable to attack or susceptible to natural disasters. I believe that is what we accomplished here today."

The bill provides \$36.3 billion for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and related agencies for combating all threats against the homeland. This year's committee-passed version of the bill provides 7% above the amount appropriated in 2007 and 5% above the amount requested by President Bush.

Of particular focus in this year's bill is language strengthening the country's borders with 3,000 additional border patrol agents in 2008 and boosting the President's request for the Customs and Border Protection agency by \$50 million. The bill also restores funding for several programs that help combat terrorism on the local level but were eliminated or severely cut by the President's budget, such as the Local Law Enforcement Terrorist Prevention program, and State Homeland Security Grants.

Additionally, approximately \$800 million is allocated for Firefighters Assistance Grants, a program designed to help local fire departments obtain critically needed equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training, and other resources needed to protect the public and emergency personnel from fire and related hazards. This amount represents a \$138 million increase over FY 2007 and \$500 million more than the amount requested by President Bush.

The bill now moves to the Senate for consideration.

For a more detailed summary of the bill, please visit the House Appropriations website:

<http://appropriations.house.gov/pdf/HomelandFC.pdf>